

September, 2008



www.ci.desoto.tx.us

City Lights *DeSoto, Texas*

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



City's Proposed FY-2008-09 Operating Budget Includes a 1¢ Property Tax Reduction

City staff presented their proposed FY 2008-09 Operating Budget to the City Council during budget workshops in August. This budget contains a 1¢ reduction on the city's property tax rate and satisfies a directive from our City Council to reduce the tax rate while maintaining the same level of service. This 1¢ reduction brings the city's effective tax rate to 69.973 cents per \$100 of property valuation.

The proposed budget includes market adjustments to the city's pay plan, an upgrade to the software used by our library, maintains the current level of annual appropriations for equipment replacement, funds all the repair and replacement accounts at the appropriate levels and provides for improvements to the Corner Theatre while maintaining current programs and services. In addition, the FY 2008-09 budget will provide financial support for a summer youth employment program sponsored by Senator

Royce West and enable the staff to explore alternative energy sources to power city facilities.

"City staff began the budget process in early spring and has been very creative in coming up with ways to provide the same or a higher level of service with less," said Jim Baugh, City Manager. "In one case, our Finance Department filled a vacant full-time position with two part-time interns. The interns provide us expertise in their field of study and we save the costs of benefits for a full-time employee," said Baugh.

Public hearings on the FY 2008-09 City of DeSoto Operating Budget will take place during regular City Council meetings on September 2nd and 16th. The full budget document is available on the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us and copies are also available for review at the DeSoto Public Library.

Would You Like to be a Guest at the DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Event on September 27th?

If so, we invite you to join us!! It's easy, just go to the website at desotodininganddialogue.org and fill out the guest registration form before September 8, 2008. Once you are assigned to a dinner table, all you have to do is agree to attend the dinner and engage in the discussion. You'll receive an invitation to your dinner table in mid-September.

DeSoto Dining and Dialogue is a volunteer-run organization that provides individuals of all ages including high school students who live or work in DeSoto, the opportunity to get to know one another at dinner events with 8 to 10 participants. These dinners are held twice a year in private homes, churches or restaurants all over town on the same night. The discussion is lead by a trained facilitator who guides participants through questions designed to elicit thoughts and opinions on issues facing our community.

This program is successful because families are willing to open their homes and host, at their own expense, a dinner for a diverse group of citizens. Facilitators and other volunteers willingly give of their time and expertise because they believe in the program. However, we need continuing community participation to keep the program strong which means that we need committed citizens like you, to participate in the program as guests. Join us in building a strong community. For more information on DeSoto Dining and Dialogue, please call Kathy (Maples) Jones at 972.230-9648.



Do You Feel Safe In Your Home?

Feeling safe in our homes and businesses is of paramount importance to all of us. Here are some suggestions to enhance that peace of mind and the feeling of being secure:

- Install good locks on all exterior doors and windows.
- Have plenty of exterior lights including motion detector lights.
- Use interior lights on timers when you are not at home.
- Install an alarm system with sensors on all exterior doors and windows. Consider having smoke detectors, heat detectors and carbon monoxide detectors connected to your alarm panel as well. Placing sensors on gun cabinets and safe closets can also enhance your feeling of security.

If it makes sense to have an alarm system, then it should make sense to have it monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week by your local 911 emergency center. Alarm monitoring is now being offered as a fee based service by the City of DeSoto's 911 Call Center for \$25 per month. No long-term contract is required.

There is a cost associated with having your monitored system reprogrammed to be monitored by DeSoto's 911 Call Center. As a result, the city will waive the first three months of their monitoring fee to help offset any cost you may incur to have your system reprogrammed. **There is no faster response to your alarm system than the response provided by your city. For more information on the City of DeSoto Alarm Monitoring Program, please contact 972.230.5248.**

Labor Day Holiday Trash Schedule

The city's solid waste contractor, Duncan Disposal, will observe the Labor Day holiday and no trash will be collected. As a result the regular collection schedule shifts by one day. Here's the schedule for trash collection for the week of September 1st:

Monday - no collection

Tuesday - regular Monday customers will be collected

Wednesday - regular Tuesday customers will be collected

Thursday - recycling will be collected

Friday - regular Thursday customers will be collected

Saturday - regular Friday customers will be collected

The normal trash collection schedule will resume on Monday, September 8, 2008. If you have any questions regarding your trash service, please call the Action Center at 972.230.9600.

CITY CALENDAR

August

- 1 FY2009 Budget Workshop with City Council - 6 p.m. - City Hall
- 2 FY2008 Budget Workshop with City Council - 9 a.m. - City Hall
- 4 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 5 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 5 National Night Out
- 7 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - 7 p.m. - Library Conference Room
- 12 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 14 Board & Commission Fair - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 19 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 25 DEDC Board Meeting - noon - City Hall
- 26 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 30 Briarwood Youth Fishing Day - Briarwood Park - 9 a.m.

September

- 1 Labor Day Holiday - city offices and facilities closed
- 2 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - 7 p.m. - Library Conference Room
- 4 "A Soldier's Play" opens in the Corner Theatre
- 8 Park Development Corp. Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - Recreation Center
- 9 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 13 VIVA DeSoto - Elerson Park - noon - 6 p.m.
- 16 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 28 DEDC Board Meeting - noon - City Hall
- 23 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. City Hall
- 27 DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Event



With the hot, dry weather work is progressing nicely on the Town Center project. This is the view from the top of the parking garage overlooking residential building two and the swimming pool that it located in it's courtyard. Trammell Crow will be opening a leasing office for the project in September in the Library Assembly Hall.

The DeSoto Public Library's Teen Volunteer Program is Proud to Announce: *The SPOT* is Coming Soon.....

The Spot is the place for adept teens; proficient in and at everything; proficient in innovation, knowledge, movement, and togetherness; just to name a few things. Teen volunteers have been working for eight weeks on the development of their space at the library and they named it **The Spot**.

Developing **The Spot** was just one of the projects for the eight-week Teen Summer Volunteer Program this year. This program was designed to give teens a complete library experience and introduce them to possible library careers. They discussed everything from why more teens don't come to the library to how to get them to start coming.



Teen volunteers, back row Saidah, Cora, Chris, Alante', Gemma, Kariss, front row Daylon and Kewanis pose with **The Spot** logo they helped create.

As a part of the program, the teen volunteers provided a story time performance for preschool age children, which included teens reading stories, putting on a puppet show, playing musical instruments, and crafts with the kids. They also worked with a designer to create a logo for the new teen room which they named **The Spot** that will be used in all marketing materials for teens. They picked the colors and worked with the designer/artist to help paint the room, which included painting their logo on the wall. The designer/artist taught the teens painting techniques and they will also pick the furniture for the room.

The Teen volunteers are also the stars of their very own video that will be used to market the library and its services. Over a four week period, the teens worked with the city's videographer, Daryl Tate, to conceive the idea, write the script and act in the video which will be posted to the library website.

For more information on the Teen Volunteer Program at the library, call Marq Runnells at 972 230-9663.



Daryl Tate, the city's videographer, films teen volunteer, Gemma reading to a young library patron for the library marketing video.

City Council Approves A Monthly Fuel Surcharge for Duncan Disposal but will Maintain the Current Solid Waste Residential Collection Rate of \$13.04 per Month Through September 30, 2009

On July 15, 2008, the DeSoto City Council voted to approve an additional monthly fuel adjustment to cover a portion of Duncan Disposal's increased diesel fuel costs. **But, the Council also agreed to pay for the monthly surcharges out of available fund balance in the Sanitation Fund and NOT pass on that additional cost to our residential, industrial, or commercial customers through September 30, 2009.** The City Council made the decision to absorb the fuel increases rather than pass them on to our citizens on such short notice as a way to help manage the costs paid by our citizens for city services.

Fuel adjustments were calculated and approved by Council based on the actual fuel usage projected by Duncan Disposal and the price per gallon of diesel fuel for each of their three types of collections: residential, commercial, and industrial. Fuel adjustments begin when diesel fuel reaches \$3.75 per gallon and are capped at a maximum price of \$7.00 per gallon. For example, if diesel costs \$4.50 per gallon, a monthly fuel adjustment of \$0.29 per residential household collected would be paid to Duncan by the city. Based on 14,038 houses collected monthly, this fuel adjustment would cost the City of DeSoto \$4,071 for that month. Since the fuel adjustment was capped at a diesel price of \$7.00 per gallon, the maximum monthly fuel adjustment paid by the city will be \$1.25 per household collected or approximately \$17,548 per month. For more information on the actual monthly fuel adjustments, go to www.ci.desoto.tx.us/trashfueladjustments.

As stated earlier, the City Council agreed to absorb this fuel adjustment from the available fund balance in the Sanitation Fund through September 30, 2009. However, the Sanitation Fund cannot absorb these costs beyond September 30, 2009 without a rate increase. **Therefore, the City will hold a number of citizen focus groups, including a town meeting; in the spring of 2009 to seek citizen input on whether you are willing to pay an additional fee to maintain existing service levels or want to maintain current rates by reducing services.** Existing service levels that will be included in this discussion are: participation in the Dallas County Household Hazardous Waste Program; street sweeping of residential and arterial streets; median landscaping and maintenance; and a four-person litter crew that picks up trash weekdays to keep DeSoto streets clean. This discussion will not be to rate the services of Duncan Disposal or to change the type of collection service currently offered by Duncan Disposal. The current collection service for residential pickup is under contract until May 30, 2012. Once these meetings are scheduled, additional information will be included in future issues of the City Lights newsletter and on the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us

VIVA DESOTO!!

*Celebrating Diez y Seis &
Hispanic Heritage Month*

**Saturday, September 13th
noon to 6pm**

**at Elerson Park (next door to Wal-Mart)
250 N. Elerson Road**

Join us for an afternoon of dancing, Mariachi Music, food and fun. Admission is free. For more information call Special Event Coordinator, Carolyn Campbell at 972.230.9651.



Local talent, Norma Valles con Mariachi will perform at VIVA DeSoto on September 13th. Norma is the Queen of Mariachi music in the DFW Metroplex.



The DeSoto Fitness Center will observe special holiday hours on Labor Day, September 1st. The facility will be open from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m. that day. The regular schedule will resume on September 2, 2008.

African-American Repertory Theater Presents



In a 1944 Louisiana army camp housing black soldiers, a sergeant is murdered. Capt. Davenport is sent to investigate and finds the truth even more shocking than the murder.
Don't miss this powerful play!

**@ DeSoto Corner Theatre
DeSoto Town Center
211 E. Pleasant Run Road
DeSoto, TX 75115**

September Show Dates & Times

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 7:30 pm preview	5 8 pm	6 3 pm 8 pm
7 3 pm	8	9	10	11 7:30 pm	12 8 pm	13 3 pm 8 pm
14 3 pm	15	16	17	18	19 8 pm	20 3 pm 8 pm
21 3 pm 7:30 pm	22	23	24	25 7:30 pm	26 8 pm	27 3 pm 8 pm
28 3 pm	29	30				

Ticket Prices:

\$10 (Preview)

\$15 (Matinee)

\$20 (Evening)

Tickets may be purchased online @ www.aareptheater.com or call 972-572-0998

Tickets are also available at the door. Box office opens *one hour* before show



DESOTO FITNESS CENTER

PROMOTION PERIOD

August 5 - September 30

FREE FITNESS MEMBERSHIP

FITNESS PLAN 1

Sign up for a 2 months membership and receive a one month's membership for FREE.

FITNESS PLAN 2

Sign up a new member to the fitness center and you will receive a FREE month's membership.

You can only choose one fitness plan.

HOURS

M-TH: 5:00am - 9:30pm

FRI: 5:00am - 6:00pm

SAT: 6:45am - 6:00pm

SUN: 1:00pm - 5:00pm

EQUIPMENT

Life Fitness Treadmills

Cybex Weight Equipment

Hammer Strength Equipment

True Fitness Elliptical Trainers

Expresso Fitness Bike

Arc Trainer

Jacobs Ladder

Free weight area

INFO: 972.230.9655

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